



FIRST EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE OF THE NORTHWEST DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

Project Number: 3018670

Address: 1701 NW 56th Street

Applicant: Brenda Barnes, Clark Design Group, PLLC

Date of Meeting: Monday, December 22, 2014

Board Members Present: Marc Angelillo
Ellen Cecil
Jerry Coburn
Dale Kutzero
David Nieman (Chair)

DPD Staff Present: Michael Dorcy

SITE & VICINITY

Site Zone: NC3-85 (Neighborhood Commercial)

Nearby Zones: (North) NC3-65
(South) NC3-85
(East) NC3--85
(West) NC3-85

Lot Area: 28,500 sf



Current Development:

The site consists of six parcels, five of which are occupied by smaller residential buildings, facing onto NW 56th Street, just west of 17th Avenue NW. The site is located a half block north of NW Market Street and Swedish Medical Center-Ballard.

Surrounding Development and Neighborhood Character:

The site is located within the Ballard Urban Center Village. It is located on a long single block face that extends from 17th Avenue NW on the east to 20th Avenue NW on the west. The north side of NW 56th Street is occupied by a mixture of single-family and multifamily residences. Some multi-family structures of more recent vintage are intermingled with older single family houses throughout the immediate area. A mix of institutional and commercial buildings are located along NW Market Street and the blocks to the south of the site.

Access:

Access to the site is available from an alley that runs east and west south of the development site.

Environmentally Critical Areas:

There are no ECA's on the site.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The applicant proposes a mixed-use structure with some 4,400 sq. ft. of retail space and 10 live/work units at grade, and six floors containing 177 residential apartments in a seven -story building. Parking for 114 vehicles will be provided below and at grade.

Early Design Guidance: November 24, 2014

The packet includes materials presented at the meeting, and is available online by entering the project number (3018670) at this website:

http://www.seattle.gov/dpd/Planning/Design_Review_Program/Project_Reviews/Reports/default.asp.

The packet is also available to view in the file, by contacting the Public Resource Center at DPD:

Mailing Public Resource Center

Address: 700 Fifth Ave., Suite 2000
P.O. Box 34019
Seattle, WA 98124-4019

Email: PRC@seattle.gov

DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

The preferred option, Option C, would be a seven-story structure with a ground floor containing two residential lobbies, a retail space (3,917 Sq. ft.) at the corner of 17th Avenue NW and NW 56th Street, 11 live/work units along the street front, and parking for 117 vehicles underlying 6 stories of residential units, containing a total of 163 residential units. Amenity areas would be provided on the second and third levels as well on the rooftop. There would be additional live/work units as well as some of the residential units oriented to the south, activating the alley façade. The middle portion of the NW 56th Street façade would be recessed between “bookends” which would be pushed forward to the street front. The rear of the structure would be pushed to the alley. Option B, would be pushed to the street front and generally unmodulated, with top five floors recessed from the alley. Option A would likewise be pushed to the street above the live/work units and otherwise be generally unmodulated along this face.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Sixteen members of the public attending the meeting signed in to become parties of record and several expressed concerns regarding a number of issues, Including: the undesirability of big building-small apartments characterizing recent development in Ballard; the disappearance of green space for the neighborhood; disappearance of the historic and established “feel” of Ballard; the proliferation of large apartment buildings in general; impacts on the availability of parking; infrastructure stretched to the breaking point; the disappearance of small retail spaces that actually serve the neighborhood.

PRIORITIES & BOARD RECOMMENDATIONS

After visiting the site, considering the analysis of the site and context provided by the proponents, and hearing public comment, the Design Review Board members provided the following siting and design guidance.

FIRST EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE November 24, 2014

The Board voiced the following concerns:

- It was noted that this was a big (long at 300 feet)) building that needed to be broken up along a finer scale. Although the preferred option divided the massing along NW 56th Street into three parts, the Board noted that there was no compelling reason for the symmetry of the north façade of the structure—the book ends or towers need not be equal in breadth and bulk; the west end, for example might better transition to the building to its side by losing some height. The Board requested further exploration of the massing that would diminish the perception of height, bulk and scale.
- The proposed north-facing facades did not clearly address the zone change at NW 56th Street and the smaller residential structures currently across the street.

- The Board asked the design team to consider the impact on existing smaller structures, in particular the smaller structure to the west of the development site. This consideration would examine blank walls, window adjacencies, the effectiveness of voluntary setbacks, etc.
- It was unclear how the so-called amenity areas proposed would actually function as “amenities.”
- It was not clear how the live/work spaces were intended to work and function as live/work spaces: would they provide a porous edge, with transparency, along the sidewalk? How could they effectively engage the sidewalk and enhance the pedestrian experience on NW 56th Street while still maintaining an element of privacy?
- The Board supported the desire to create a contemporary look, utilizing quality materials and careful detailing. Reference was made during the presentation to the Scandinavian heritage of the locale, and some subtle reference was evident in the materials presented—if the reference is appropriate, it should be exploited and made more prominent and not totally subtle.
- The entries should be clearly readable and the primary residential entry should receive treatment as “primary.”

DESIGN REVIEW GUIDELINES

The priority Citywide and Neighborhood guidelines identified by the Board as Priority Guidelines are summarized below, with the note that a second Early Design Guidance meeting could well give further priority and focus to the guidelines particularly important to the success of the project. For the full text please visit the [Design Review website](#).

CONTEXT & SITE

CS1 Natural Systems and Site Features: Use natural systems/features of the site and its surroundings as a starting point for project design.

CS1-B Sunlight and Natural Ventilation

CS1-B-2. Daylight and Shading: Maximize daylight for interior and exterior spaces and minimize shading on adjacent sites through the placement and/or design of structures on site.

CS1-E Water

CS1-E-1. Natural Water Features: If the site includes any natural water features, consider ways to incorporate them into project design, where feasible

CS2 Urban Pattern and Form: Strengthen the most desirable forms, characteristics, and patterns of the streets, block faces, and open spaces in the surrounding area.

CS2-A Location in the City and Neighborhood

CS2-A-1. Sense of Place: Emphasize attributes that give a distinctive sense of place. Design the building and open spaces to enhance areas where a strong identity already exists, and create a sense of place where the physical context is less established.

CS2-A-2. Architectural Presence: Evaluate the degree of visibility or architectural presence that is appropriate or desired given the context, and design accordingly.

CS2-B Adjacent Sites, Streets, and Open Spaces

CS2-B-3. Character of Open Space: Contribute to the character and proportion of surrounding open spaces.

CS2-C Relationship to the Block

CS2-C-3. Full Block Sites: Break up long facades of full-block buildings to avoid a monolithic presence. Provide detail and human scale at street-level, and include repeating elements to add variety and rhythm to the façade and overall building design.

CS2-D Height, Bulk, and Scale

CS2-D-1. Existing Development and Zoning: Review the height, bulk, and scale of neighboring buildings as well as the scale of development anticipated by zoning for the area to determine an appropriate complement and/or transition.

CS2-D-5. Respect for Adjacent Sites: Respect adjacent properties with design and site planning to minimize disrupting the privacy of residents in adjacent buildings.

CS3 Architectural Context and Character: Contribute to the architectural character of the neighborhood.

CS3-A Emphasizing Positive Neighborhood Attributes

CS3-A-2. Contemporary Design: Explore how contemporary designs can contribute to the development of attractive new forms and architectural styles; as expressed through use of new materials or other means.

CS3-A-4. Evolving Neighborhoods: In neighborhoods where architectural character is evolving or otherwise in transition, explore ways for new development to establish a positive and desirable context for others to build upon in the future.

PUBLIC LIFE

PL2 Walkability: Create a safe and comfortable walking environment that is easy to navigate and well-connected to existing pedestrian walkways and features.

PL2-B Safety and Security

PL2-B-1. Eyes on the Street: Create a safe environment by providing lines of sight and encouraging natural surveillance.

PL2-B-3. Street-Level Transparency: Ensure transparency of street-level uses (for uses such as nonresidential uses or residential lobbies), where appropriate, by keeping views open into spaces behind walls or plantings, at corners, or along narrow passageways.

PL3 Street-Level Interaction: Encourage human interaction and activity at the street-level with clear connections to building entries and edges.

PL3-A Entries

PL3-A-1. Design Objectives: Design primary entries to be obvious, identifiable, and distinctive with clear lines of sight and lobbies visually connected to the street.

PL3-A-4. Ensemble of Elements: Design the entry as a collection of coordinated elements including the door(s), overhead features, ground surface, landscaping, lighting, and other features.

PL3-B Residential Edges

PL3-B-3. Buildings with Live/Work Uses: Maintain active and transparent facades in the design of live/work residences. Design the first floor so it can be adapted to other commercial use as needed in the future.

PL4 Active Transportation: Incorporate design features that facilitate active forms of transportation such as walking, bicycling, and use of transit.

PL4-B Planning Ahead for Bicyclists

PL4-B-2. Bike Facilities: Facilities such as bike racks and storage, bike share stations, shower facilities and lockers for bicyclists should be located to maximize convenience, security, and safety.

DESIGN CONCEPT

DC1 Project Uses and Activities: Optimize the arrangement of uses and activities on site.

DC1-A Arrangement of Interior Uses

DC1-A-3. Flexibility: Build in flexibility so the building can adapt over time to evolving needs, such as the ability to change residential space to commercial space as needed.

DC2 Architectural Concept: Develop an architectural concept that will result in a unified and functional design that fits well on the site and within its surroundings.

DC2-A Massing

DC2-A-2. Reducing Perceived Mass: Use secondary architectural elements to reduce the perceived mass of larger projects.

DC2-B Architectural and Facade Composition

DC2-B-1. Façade Composition: Design all building facades—including alleys and visible roofs— considering the composition and architectural expression of the building as a whole. Ensure that all facades are attractive and well-proportioned.

DC2-B-2. Blank Walls: Avoid large blank walls along visible façades wherever possible. Where expanses of blank walls, retaining walls, or garage facades are unavoidable, include uses or design treatments at the street level that have human scale and are designed for pedestrians.

DC3 Open Space Concept: Integrate open space design with the building design so that they complement each other.

DC3-B Open Space Uses and Activities

DC3-B-4. Multifamily Open Space: Design common and private open spaces in multifamily projects for use by all residents to encourage physical activity and social interaction.

DC4 Exterior Elements and Finishes: Use appropriate and high quality elements and finishes for the building and its open spaces.

DC4-A Exterior Elements and Finishes

DC4-A-1. Exterior Finish Materials: Building exteriors should be constructed of durable and maintainable materials that are attractive even when viewed up close. Materials that have texture, pattern, or lend themselves to a high quality of detailing are encouraged.

DC4-A-2. Climate Appropriateness: Select durable and attractive materials that will age well in Seattle's climate, taking special care to detail corners, edges, and transitions.

DC4-B Signage

DC4-B-1. Scale and Character: Add interest to the streetscape with exterior signs and attachments that are appropriate in scale and character to the project and its environs.

DC4-B-2. Coordination with Project Design: Develop a signage plan within the context of architectural and open space concepts, and coordinate the details with façade design, lighting, and other project features to complement the project as a whole, in addition to the surrounding context.

DEVELOPMENT STANDARD DEPARTURES

The Board's recommendation on the requested departure(s) will be based on the departure's potential to help the project better meet these design guidelines priorities and achieve a better overall project design than could be achieved without the departure(s)

At the time of the FIRST Early Design Guidance meeting the following departure was requested:

1. **SMC 23.47A.008.B.3. Street-level Development Standards :** The Code requires an average depth of 30 feet and a minimum depth of 15 feet for non-residential street-level uses. The applicant proposes a reduction in minimum and average depths.

The Board indicated a desire for the applicants to more clearly demonstrate the disposition and functioning of the units and clearly articulate the request as better meeting the intention of the Design Guidelines.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Show and explain how the proposed amenity areas function as true amenity areas. Show the choice of location of these spaces as optimizations among options.**
- **Show and explain how the building form addresses concerns regarding height, bulk and scale relations to the smaller existing structure to the west.**
- **Show and explain how the proposed structure puts a best face toward the structure to the west.**
- **Explain the function and performance of the live/work units and clearly show how requested departures in their regards better meet the intentions of the Design Guidelines.**
- **Consider steps for achieving pedestrian safety at the alley.**

- Give clear expression to the residential entries with the primary entry appropriately scaled and appointed.

BOARD DIRECTION

At the conclusion of the FIRST EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE meeting, the Board recommended moving forward to MUP application.